

RETAIL PRICES - SEPTEMBER QUARTER, 1948.

ALL ITEMS - "C" SERIES.

Index numbers (with the weighted average of the six Capital Cities in 1923-1927 as base of 1000) of retail prices of all items ("C" Series) for the September quarter, 1948, with figures for June quarter, 1948, for comparison (in brackets), were:- Brisbane 1251 (1227), Toowoomba 1260 (1232), Rockhampton 1259 (1225), Townsville 1300 (1263), Bundaberg 1241 (1203), and Warwick 1249 (1220).

The "C" Series index for Brisbane rose from 1227 in the June quarter to 1251 in the September quarter of 1948. The rise of 2.0 per cent., though less than the rise of 2.8 per cent. in the previous quarter, made a total rise of 10.1 per cent. in the twelve months ended September, 1948. This was the greatest increase in any period of twelve months since prices started rising in the early 1930's, following the economic depression and continuing during and since the recent war. The nearest approach was a rise of 8.5 per cent. in the twelve months ended September, 1942, just before the "Price Ceiling" policy was adopted in 1943. In the other Queensland cities for which indexes are compiled, the percentage rises in the September quarter ranged from 2.3 in Toowoomba to 3.2 in Bundaberg.

Increases during the quarter were evenly distributed amongst the main groups of prices - food and groceries, clothing and footwear, and miscellaneous items each rising by just over 2 per cent. in Brisbane.

The indexes show the following percentage increases when compared with those for the periods shown.

Retail Price Index, "C" Series. Percentage Increase, September Quarter, 1948.

City.			From Year Ended June, 1939.	From September Quarter, 1947.	From June Quarter, 1948.
			%	%	%
Brisbane	..	..	45.0	10.1	2.0
Toowoomba	..	..	48.1	9.3	2.3
Rockhampton	..	..	46.2	10.2	2.8
Townsville	..	..	42.5	10.1	2.9
Bundaberg	..	..	47.6	11.7	3.2
Warwick	..	..	51.9	9.7	2.4

Food and groceries, clothing and footwear, and the miscellaneous group of items comprising household drapery and hardware, fuel, light, fares, etc., have shown the following percentage changes during the last quarter and since 1938-39.

Retail Prices, Percentage Increase, September Quarter, 1948.

City.	Food and Groceries.		Clothing and Footwear.		Miscellaneous Items.	
	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From June Quarter, 1948.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From June Quarter, 1948.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From June Quarter, 1948.
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Brisbane ..	41.6	2.3	111.7	2.5	30.3	2.2
Toowoomba	52.0	2.5	106.3	2.8	30.3	2.9
Rockhampton	40.4	2.9	107.6	3.4	33.2	2.5
Townsville	37.0	3.1	109.3	3.4	31.6	4.5
Bundaberg	40.8	3.8	110.8	4.2	28.7	2.6
Warwick ..	46.1	3.1	113.0	2.6	30.7	2.1

FOOD AND RENT (4 AND 5 ROOMED HOUSES) - "B" SERIES.

Index numbers for food and rent only ("B" Series) for September quarter, 1948 (with base 1000 in 1923-1927 for the six State Capitals) were:- Brisbane, 1074; Toowoomba, 1092; Rockhampton, 1072; Townsville, 1133; Bundaberg, 1040; and Warwick, 1047.

From June quarter, 1948, to September quarter, 1948, the "B" Series index showed increases in Brisbane, 1.5%; Toowoomba, 1.8%; Rockhampton, 2.4%; Townsville, 2.2%; Bundaberg, 2.8%; and Warwick, 2.3%.

The principal rises in food prices were in soap, kerosene, butter, cheese, bacon, and condensed milk, offset to some extent by seasonal decreases in eggs and onions.

The rent index increased in Brisbane, 0.1%; Rockhampton, 1.0%; and Warwick, 0.5%; but remained stationary in Toowoomba, Townsville, and Bundaberg.

Compared with September quarter, 1947, the "B" Series index increased in Brisbane, 9.9%; Toowoomba, 9.2%; Rockhampton, 10.4%; Townsville, 9.6%; Bundaberg, 10.9%; and Warwick, 9.7%.

The rent index showed no movement in Townsville, but increases were recorded in Brisbane, 0.2%; Toowoomba, 0.8%; Rockhampton, 1.0%; Bundaberg, 0.6%; and Warwick, 1.1%.

CLOTHING, FOOTWEAR, AND MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS.

The marked upward trend in clothing and footwear prices continued in this quarter and the index for Brisbane is now 111.7 per cent. above that for the year ended June, 1939. Principal increases were in men's suits, shirts, and singlets, and in boys' suits.

Following increases in the prices of electricity, blankets, and sheets, the miscellaneous items index increased by 2.2 per cent. in Brisbane and is now 30.3 per cent. above its pre-war level. This index remained fairly stable from June, 1943, until a substantial increase was recorded in June quarter, 1948.

COMPARISON OF COSTS IN QUEENSLAND CITIES.

The following table shows the amounts, for the various Queensland cities, required in September quarter, 1948, to purchase the quantity of goods or housing which would have cost £1 in Brisbane.

Amounts Required in Various Cities to Purchase Equivalent of £1 in Brisbane.

City.	All Items.			Food and Groceries.			Rent (4 and 5 Rooms).			Clothing and Footwear.		
	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.
Brisbane ..	1.	0.	0.	1.	0.	0.	1.	0.	0.	1.	0.	0.
Toowoomba ..	1.	0.	2.	1.	0.	5.	1.	0.	2.	19.	6.	
Rockhampton ..	1.	0.	2.	1.	0.	9.	18.	3.		1.	0.	0.
Townsville ..	1.	0.	9.	1.	1.	7.	1.	0.	0.	1.	0.	0.
Bundaberg ..		19.	10.	1.	1.	0.	15.	10.		1.	0.	2.
Warwick ..	1.	0.	0.	1.	0.	5.	17.	6.		1.	0.	0.

During the quarter price rises were slightly greater in the provincial cities than in Brisbane. Average prices in Warwick are now the same as in Brisbane, while, in Bundaberg, goods costing £1 in Brisbane can be purchased for only 2d. less compared with an advantage of 10d. in 1939. In Toowoomba and Rockhampton, goods are 2d. in the £ more than in Brisbane, and in Townsville the disadvantage is now 9d.

BASIC WAGE RATES IN STATE CAPITAL CITIES.

The following table shows for the September quarter of 1948 the Retail Price Index Number ("C" Series) for each of the six Capital Cities and the prevailing basic wage rates for males prescribed by Commonwealth and State Industrial tribunals respectively. The fourth column shows the amounts which would have been required in Brisbane to provide a standard of living equivalent to that provided by each State Basic Wage in its own Capital City. The differences between these amounts and the State Basic Wage for Brisbane, which are given in the last column, show the margin of advantage in real purchasing power provided by the Queensland Basic Wage over each of the other State Basic Wages.

Retail Prices and Basic Wage Rates - September Quarter, 1948.

Capital City.	Retail Price Index ("C" Series) 3rd Qtr., 1948.	Commonwealth Court Basic Wage for Males at 15.8.48.	State Court Basic Wage for Males at 15.8.48.	Equivalent at Brisbane Prices of each State Basic Wage.	Margin of Purchasing Power in Favour of Brisbane State Basic Wage.
	Index.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	s. d.
Brisbane ..	1251	5. 13. 0.	5. 17. 0.	5. 17. 0.	- -
Sydney ..	1337	6. 0. 0.	6. 0. 0.	5. 12. 3.	4. 9.
Melbourne ..	1309	5. 17. 0.	5. 17. 0.	5. 11. 10.	5. 2.
Adelaide ..	1293	5. 14. 0.	5. 17. 0.	5. 13. 2.	3. 10.
Perth ..	1282	5. 12. 0.	5. 17. 5.	5. 14. 7.	2. 5.
Hobart ..	1307	5. 15. 0.	5. 15. 0.	5. 10. 1.	6. 11.

Following the publication of the index numbers shown in the above table, the basic wage of the Commonwealth Court was automatically adjusted from 1st November, 1948. The new rates and the amounts of the adjustments are shown below, together with the latest basic wage rates for males and females declared by the various State Industrial authorities, and the dates from which they operated.

Basic Wages Rates - December Quarter, 1948.

Capital City.	Commonwealth Basic Wage.		State Basic Wage.		
	Amount. (a)	Increase on Previous Quarter.	Males.	Females.	Date of Operation.
	£. s. d.	s. d.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	
Brisbane ..	5. 15. 0.	2. 0.	5. 19. 0.	3. 12. 6.	1.11.48
Sydney ..	6. 2. 0.	2. 0.	6. 2. 0.	3. 6. 0.	1.11.48
Melbourne ..	6. 0. 0.	3. 0.	(6. 0. 0.)	(3. 5. 0.)	(1.11.48)(b)
Adelaide ..	5. 16. 0.	2. 0.	5. 17. 0.	3. 6. 6.	7. 7.48(c)
Perth ..	5. 16. 0.	4. 0.	6. 1. 7.	3. 5. 8.	1.11.48
Hobart ..	5. 18. 0.	3. 0.	(5. 18. 0.)	(3. 3. 6.)	(1.11.48)(b)

(a) Rate for males : the female rate is generally 54 per cent. of the male rate.

(b) No State wage declared, but rates shown are those of Commonwealth Court which are followed to a large extent.

(c) No adjustment following publication of September quarter index numbers had been made to date of issue of this bulletin.

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4th November, 1948.

Correction - In the table showing retail prices and basic wage rates, published in the bulletin for June quarter, 1948, please amend as follows - Col. 3 - Adelaide, £5.14.0; Perth, £5.12.0; Hobart, £5.15.0; Col. 4 - Hobart, £5.15.0; Col. 5 - Hobart, £5.10.7; Col. 6 - Hobart, 6s.5d.